

### **REMARKS**

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-7, 9-17 and 20 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the Amendments and Remarks as set forth hereinbelow.

### **ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER**

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that claims 8-10 and 18-20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In light of this indication, claims 1 and 11 have been amended to include the subject matter recited in dependent claims 8 and 18, respectively. Accordingly, the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a) are moot. Therefore, this application is in condition for allowance.

### **CONCLUSION**

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patents relied on by the Examiner, either alone or in combination.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the David A. Bilodeau at (703) 205-8072 in the Washington, D.C. area.

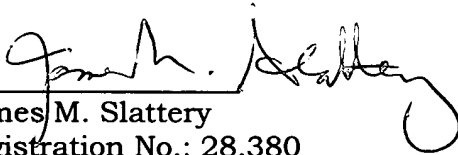
Application No. 10/646,776  
Reply to Office Action of June 5, 2006  
Office Action dated August 18, 2006

Docket No.: 0505-1236P  
Page 8 of 8

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees. In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Dated: August 18, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By   
James M. Slattery  
Registration No.: 28,380  
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP  
8110 Gatehouse Road  
Suite 100 East  
P.O. Box 747  
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747  
(703) 205-8000  
Attorney for Applicant

JMS/DAB/ta